Accessibility Element

The Federal Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), a civil rights law, is intended to remove the barriers that prevent people with disabilities from participating as independent members of society. By improving access to employment opportunities, government services, public accommodations, transportation, and telecommunications for those with disabilities, everyone is given the opportunity to realize their full potential and achieve their dreams. Together, the ADA Accessibility Guidelines for Buildings and Facilities (ADAAG) and the Uniform Building Code (UBC) provide minimum required standards for access to public and private buildings and services for people with physical disabilities. Public facilities are also guided by the Uniform Federal Accessibility Standards (UFAS). Accessibility is an issue that impacts all members of the community, with or without physical limitations. Through illness, accidents or natural aging, most citizens will experience difficulties walking, seeing, hearing, driving or getting around. Whether permanent or temporary, the inconvenience or inability, discomfort and frustration of accessing needed facilities or services is not exclusive to a small minority of the community. Further, as the population ages, these difficulties will increase for larger numbers of citizens seeking access to facilities, services, or events. As a centrally located community with extensive public transportation and services, Tempe may attract larger numbers of individuals with disabilities. Accommodating this growing population requires sensitive attention to land use and design. The goal of the Accessibility Element is to create a city that has design potential to meet community needs through universal designs which provide access and benefit through accessible public and private facilities, services and programs.

Objectives

- Create adaptive environments that can meet current and future needs of the community
- Use universal designs, which are cost efficient and benefit the greatest number of users possible
- Where possible, create multi-user access that does not separate portions of the populations
- Promote ergonomic, human-scaled environments

Strategies

- Work toward code and ordinance compliance of pre-existing facilities that do not meet ADA and/or UBC requirements
- Implement a program of ongoing monitoring and assessment of accessibility features within the city while prioritizing problem areas and make necessary repairs or improvements as funds are available
- Dedicate staff and resources to an internal audit of existing city facilities and review of proposed city facilities
- Dedicate staff and resources to an external assessment of private facilities used by the public, and review of proposed developments
- Create a city-wide map of areas with access issues, and prioritize capital improvements to remediate problems
- Monitor ongoing technology research that may develop efficient means of meeting accessibility challenges
- Identify a knowledgeable key point of contact within the city staff to provide timely and accurate response to public input and to ensure implementation of goals and objectives
- Provide opportunities for people with different abilities to meet, live, work or play together
- Work toward code and ordinance certification
- Provide opportunities for access, use and interpretation of historic structures while retaining historic integrity
- Provide educational material on design guidelines for accessibility
- Encourage residential remodeling, reinvestment and new development that is accessible or readily adaptable for future accessibility
- Retain the Commission on Disability Concerns